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CORN GROWERS FACE WORST SEED SHORTAGE IN YEARS

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The present season is one of the worst in recent history of Illinois corn production. Last spring the season was late, cold, and wet. This not only delayed corn planting but also prevented the proper development of the corn that was planted. The seed used in many cases was inferior. This combination of a bad season and rather poor seed thinned the stand of corn. To make matters worse these thin stands in many cases contained hill after hill of weak plants. Thruout the entire season the development of the corn crop has been slow because of continued cool weather. From present indications it seems that there is a real seed corn emergency in sight for next year.



FIG. 1.—SEED CORN SHOULD BE SACK-PICKED
FROM THE STANDING STALKS

The parent plant should be observed and seed ears selected only from healthy, erect, strong, vigorous stalks.

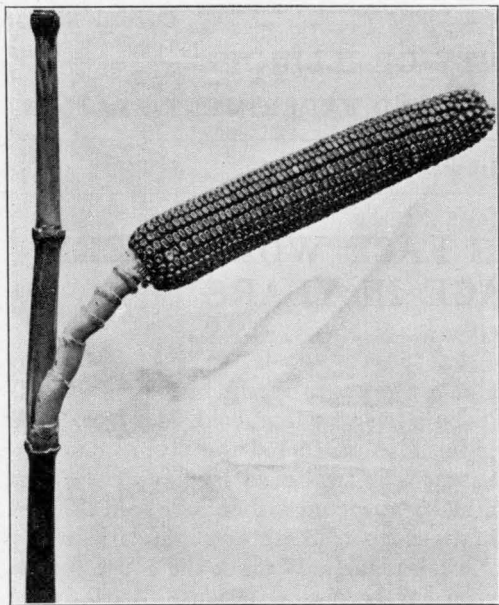


FIG. 2.—A WELL-MATURED EAR ON A HEALTHY STALK AND SHANK

Special attention should be given to the shank of the ear. It should be medium long, sound, and stiff enough to hold the ear at an angle like that shown above.

ance and adaptability. In addition, seed ears should be selected only from standing, vigorous stalks free from smut, leaf streaking, discolorations, and abnormalities. Wilted and prematurely dead stalks commonly bear diseased ears. Such stalks frequently are mistaken for early maturing stalks by those not suspecting their diseased condition.

Ears growing on weak and broken shanks should be avoided as far as possible. Husks should completely cover the ear. Ears should be chosen that are sound and as fully matured as possible. With such an apparent seed corn emergency in sight it is not well to dwell too much on the type while making selections in the field. Ear type can be observed more fully when the ears are examined in the storage room prior to the germination test.

Pick Early if Frosts Threaten

This season it may be necessary to pick seed corn before it is fully matured in order to protect it from frost injury. In all probability it will be advisable to gather seed ears soon after they have reached the

The seed corn emergency of 1917-1918 was tempered somewhat by the fact that considerable old corn of good quality had been carried over and was available. The corn crop of 1923 was so injured by frosts and subsequent freezes that good seed corn was difficult to find this spring. There will therefore be practically no seed available from old corn next spring.

Farmers will do well to gather an abundant supply of the best seed stock available this fall for next season's planting.

Choose Sound Ears from Healthy, Standing Stalks

Of course it is always desirable to choose seed from well-established varieties of known perform-

well-dented stage. During normal years the recommendation would be made NOT to gather seed before full and complete maturity of the ears. *But this is not a normal year, it is an unusual season.* In case warm weather continues and frost is delayed it will be profitable to gather a second lot of seed which has had time to mature more fully on the standing stalk.

Wise to Select More Than Will Be Needed

It seems wise to gather a large supply of seed corn because a shortage appears certain in much of the corn belt. This year there will be



FIG. 3.—COVERED AND EXPOSED EAR TIPS

Ears with tips exposed to the weather are likely to be infected with corn diseases. Choosing seed ears like the one on the left will be a step in reducing disease infection.

much to discard thru later physical and germinator selection. If the grower wishes enough seed for his own use it will be necessary to select from three to five times the quantity required to plant the farm. Good seed corn is likely to be on call at a premium next spring and a few bushels more than is necessary for the farm planting should have a ready sale.

Storage Room Should Be Well Ventilated

As soon as the seed ears have been gathered they should be stored in a well-ventilated room and placed in racks similar to those shown in

Fig. 4. If the dampness of the season continues and cold weather sets in rather early some artificial drying will be profitable. For further reading on this subject, write the Illinois Experiment Station.

There are many types of homemade as well as commercial seed corn racks that are highly satisfactory. The important point is to see that the rack does not permit the ears to pile up one on the other. Any rack which allows air circulation around each ear is satisfactory provided it is kept in a well-ventilated place.

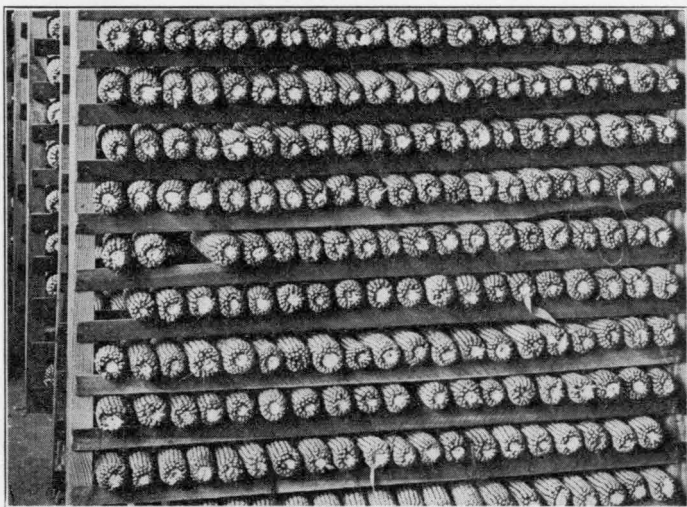


FIG. 4.—PROPER STORAGE IS ESSENTIAL

Seed corn picked early contains a high percentage of moisture which must be reduced. Seed corn stored in a well-ventilated room on racks similar to those shown here will dry out rapidly and in case of sudden drops in temperature can be protected from freezes.